The VALIANTS of VIRGINIA

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SYNOPSIS.

John Valiant, a rich society favorite, suddenly discovers that the Valiant corporation, which his father founded and which was the principal source of his wealth, has failed. He voluntarily turns over his private fortune to the receiver for the corporation. His entire remaining possessions consist of an old motor car, a white bull dog and Damory court, a neglected estate in Virginia. On the way to Damory court he meets Shirley Dandridge, an auburn-haired beauty, and decides that he is going to like Virginia immensely. Shirley's mother, Mrs. Dandridge, and Major Bristow exchange reminiscences during which it is revealed that the major, Valiant's father, and a man named Sasson were rivals for the hand of Mrs. Dandridge in her youth. Sasson and Valiant fought a duel on her account in which the former was killed. Valiant finds Damory court overgrown with weeds and creepers and the buildings in a very much neglected condition. He decides to rehabilitate the place and make the land produce a living for him. Valiant saves Shirley from the bite of a snake, which bites him. Knowing the deadliness of the bite, Shirley sucks the poison from the wound and saves his life. Shirley tells her mother of the incident and the latter is strangely moved at hearing that a Valiant is again living at Damory court.

CHAPTER XVI—Continued.

The major nodded, "Ah, yes," he said. "The Continental prison-camp."

"And just over this rise there I can see an old court-house, and the Virginia Assembly boiling under the golden tongue-lashing of lean raw-boned Patrick Henry. I see a messenger gallop up and see the members scramble to their saddles—and then, Tarleton and his red-coats streaming up, too late."

"Well," commented the doctor deliberately, "all I have to say is, don't materialize too much to Mrs. Poly Gifford when you meet her. She'll have you lecturing to the Ladies' Church Guild before you know it."

"I hope you ride, Mr. Valiant?" the latter asked genially.

"I'm fond of it," said Valiant, "but I have no horse as yet."

"I was thinking," pursued the major, "of the coming tournament."

"Tournament?"

The doctor cut in. "A ridiculous cock-a-doodle-do which gives the young bucks a chance to rig out in silly toggery and prance their colts before a lot of petticoats!"

"It's an annual affair," explained the major; "a kind of spectacle. For many years, by the way, it has been held on a part of this estate—perhaps you will have no objection to its use this season?—and at night there is a dance at the Country Club. By the way, you must let me introduce you there—tomorrow. I've taken the liberty already of putting your name up."

"Good lord!" growled the doctor, aside. "He counts himself young! If I'd reached your age, Bristow—"

"You have," said the major, nettled. "Four years ago!—As I was saying, Mr. Valiant, they ride for a prize. It's a very ancient thing—I've seen references to it in a colonial manuscript in the Byrd Library at Westover. No doubt it's come down directly from the old jousts."

"You don't mean to say," cried his hearer in genuine astonishment, "that Virginia has a lineal descendant of the tourney?"

The major nodded. "Yes. Certain sections of Kentucky used to have it, too, but it has died out there. It exists now only in this state. It's a curious thing that the old knightly meetings of the middle ages should survive today only on American soil and in a corner of Virginia."

Doctor Southall, meanwhile, had set his gaze on the litter of pamphlets. He turned with an appreciative eye. "You're beginning in earnest. The Agricultural Department. And the Congressional frank."

"I'm afraid I'm a sad sketch as a scientist," laughed Valiant. "My point of view has to be a somewhat practical one. I must be self-supporting. Damory Court is a big estate. It has grain lands and forest as well. If my ancestors lived from it, I can. It's not only that," he went on more slowly, "I want to make the most of the place for its own sake, too. Not only of its possibilities for earning, but of its natural beauties. I lack the resources I once had, but I can give it thought and work, and if they can bring Damory Court back to anything even remotely resembling what it once was, I'll not spare either."

The major smote his knee and even the doctor's face showed a grim, if transient approval. "I believe you'll do it!" exclaimed the former. "And let me say, sah, that the neighborhood is not unaware of the splendid generosity which is responsible for the present lack of which you speak."

Valiant put out his hand with a little gesture of deprecation, but the other disregarded it. "Confound it, sah, it was to be expected of a Valiant. Your ancestors wrote their names in capital letters over this country. They were an up and down lot, but good or bad (and, as Southall says, I reckon"—he nodded toward the great portrait above the couch—"they weren't all little woolly lambs) they did big things in a big way."

Valiant leaned forward eagerly, a question on his lips. But at the moment a diversion occurred in the shape of Uncle Jefferson, who re-entered, bearing a tray on which set sundry jugs and clinking glasses, glowing with white and green and gold.

"You old humbug," said the doctor, "don't you know the major's that poisoned with mint-juleps already that he can't get up before eight in the morning?"

"Well, suh," tittered Uncle Jefferson, "Ah done foun' er mint-baid down below de kitchens dis mawnin'. Yo'all gemmun' 'bout de bigges' expuhts in dis yeah county, en Ah reck'n Mars' Valiant sho' 'sist on yo' samplin' et."

"Sah," said the major feelingly, turning to his host, "I'm proud to drink your health in the typical beverage of Virginia!" He touched glasses with Valiant and glared at the doctor, who was sipping his own thoughtfully. "Poems have been written on the julep, sah."

"They make good epitaphs, too," observed the doctor.

"I noticed your glass isn't going begging," the major retorted. "Unc' Jefferson, that's as good mint as grew in the gyarden of Eden. See that those lazy niggers of yours don't grub the patch out by mistake."

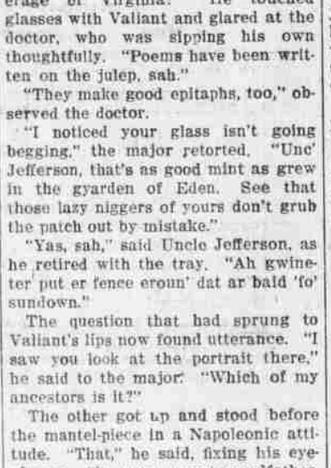
"Yas, sah," said Uncle Jefferson, as he retired with the tray. "Ah gwineter put er fence eroun' dat ar baid 'fo' sundown."

The question that had sprung to Valiant's lips now found utterance. "I saw you look at the portrait there," he said to the major. "Which of my ancestors is it?"

The other got up and stood before the mantel-piece in a Napoleonic attitude. "That," he said, fixing his eyeglasses, "is your great-grandfather, Devil-John Valiant."

"Devil-John!" echoed his host. "Yes, I've heard the name."

The doctor guffawed. "He earned it, I reckon. I never realized what a sinister expression that missing optic gives the old ruffian. There was a skirmish during the war on the hillside yonder and a bullet cut it out.



The Other Got Up and Stood Before the Mantel-Piece in a Napoleonic Attitude.

When we were boys we used to call him 'Old One-Eye.'"

"It interests me enormously," John Valiant spoke explosively.

"The stories of Devil-John would fill a mighty big book," said the major. "By all accounts he ought to have lived in the middle ages." Crossing the library, he looked into the dining-room. "I thought I remembered. The portrait over the console there is his wife, your great-grandmother. They say he bet that when he brought his bride home, she should walk into Damory Court between rows of candlesticks worth twenty-thousand dollars. He made the wager good, too, for when she came up those steps out there, there was a row of ten candles burning on either side of the doorway, each held by a young slave worth a thousand dollars in the market.

"Some say he grew jealous of his wife's beauty. There were any number of stories told of his cruelties to her that aren't worth repeating. She died early—poor lady—and your grandfather was the only issue. Devil-John himself lived to be past seventy, and at that age, when most men were stacking their sins and groaning with the gout, he was dicing and fox-hunting with the youngest of them. He always swore he would die with his boots on, and they say when the doctor told him he had only a few hours leeway, he made his slaves dress him completely and prop him on his horse. They galloped out so, a negro on either side of him. It was a stormy night, black as the Earl of Hell's riding-boots, with wind and lightning, and he rode cursing at both. There's an old black-gum tree a mile from here that they still call Devil-John's tree. They were just passing under it when the lightning struck it. Lightning has no effect on the black-gum, you know. The bolt glanced from the tree and struck him between the two slaves without harming either of them. It killed his horse, too. That's the story. To be sure at this date nobody can separate fact from fiction. Possibly he wasn't so much worse than the rest of his neighbors—not excepting the parsons. 'Other times, other manners.'"

"They weren't any worse than the present generation," said the doctor malevolently. "Your four bottle men then knew only claret: now they punish whiskey-straight."

The major buried his nose in his julep for a long moment before he looked at the doctor blandly. "I agree with you, Bristow," he said: "but it's the first time I ever heard you admit that much good of your ancestors."

"Good!" said the doctor belligerently. "Me? I don't! I said people now were no better. As for the men of that time, they were a cheap swaggering lot of bullies and swash-bucklers. When I read history I'm ashamed to be descended from them."

"I desire to inform you, sah," said the major, stung, "that I too am a descendant of those bullies and swash-bucklers, as you call them. And I wish from my heart I thought we, nowadays, could hold a tallow-dip to them."

"You refer, no doubt," said the doctor with sarcasm, "to our friend Devil-John and his ideal treatment of his wife!"

"No, sah," replied the major warmly. "I'm not referring to Devil-John. There were exceptions, no doubt, but for the most part they treated their women folk as I believe their Maker made them to be treated! The man who failed in his courtesy there, sah, was called to account for it. He was mighty apt to find himself standing in the cool dawn at the butt-end of a—"

He broke off and coughed. There was an awkward pause in which he set down his glass noisily and rose and stood before the open bookcase. "I envy you this, sah," he said with somewhat of haste. "A fine old collection. Bless my soul, what a curious volume!"

As he spoke, his hand jerked out a heavy-looking leather-back. Valiant, who had risen and stood beside him, saw instantly that what he had drawn from the shelf was the morocco case that held the rusted dueling-pistol! In the major's hands the broken box opened. A sudden startled look darted across his leonine face. With smothered exclamation he thrust it back between the books and closed the glass door.

Valiant had paled. His previous finding of the weapon had escaped his mind. Now he read, as clearly as if it had been printed in black-letter across the sunny wall, the significance of the major's confusion. That weapon had been in his father's hand when he faced his opponent in that fatal duel! It flashed across his mind as the doctor lunged for his hat and stick and got to his feet.

"Come, Bristow," said the latter irritably. "Your feet will grow fast to the floor presently. We mustn't talk a new neighbor to death. I've got to see a patient at six."

CHAPTER XVII.

John Valiant Asks a Question.

Valiant went with them to the outer door. A painful thought was flooding his mind. It hampered his speech and it was only by a violent effort that he found voice:

"One moment! There is a question I would like to ask."

Both gentlemen had turned upon the steps and as they faced him he thought a swift glance passed between them. They waited courteously, the doctor with his habitual frown, the major's hand fumbling for the black ribbon on his waistcoat.

"Since I came here, I have heard"—his tone was uneven—"of a duel in which my father was a principal. There was such a meeting?"

"There was," said the doctor after the slightest pause of surprise. "Had you known nothing of it?"

"Absolutely nothing."

The major cleared his throat. "It was something he might naturally not have made a record of," he said. "The two had been friends, and it—it was a fatal encounter for the other. The doctor and I were your father's seconds."

There was a moment's silence before Valiant spoke again. When he did his voice was steady, though drops had sprung to his forehead. "Was there any circumstance in that meeting that might be construed as reflecting on his—honor?"

"Good God, no!" said the major explosively.

"On his bearing as a gentleman?"

There was a hiatus this time in which he could hear his heart beat. In that single exclamation the major seemed to have exhausted his vocabulary. He was looking at the ground. It was the doctor who spoke at last, in a silence that to the man in the doorway weighed like a hundred atmospheres.

"No!" he said bluntly. "Certainly not. What put that into your head?"

When he was alone in the library Valiant opened the glass door and took from the shelf the morocco case. The old shiver of repugnance ran over him at the very touch of the leather. In the farthest corner was a low commode. He set the case on this and moved the big tapestry screen across the angle, hiding it from view.

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In the great hall at Damory Court the candles in their brass wall-sconces blinked back from the polished parquetry and the shining fire-dogs, filling the rather solemn gloom with an air of warmth and creature-comfort. Leaning against the newel-post, Valiant gazed about him. How different it all looked from the night of his coming!

He began to walk up and down the floor, teasing pricks of restlessness urging him. He opened the door and passed into the unlighted dining-room. On the sideboard set a silver loving-cup that had arrived the day before in a huge box with his books and knick-knacks. He had won it at polo. He lifted it, fingering its carved handles. He remembered that when that particular score had been made, Katharine Fargo had sat in one of the drags at the side-line.

But the memory evoked no thrill. Instead, the thought of her palely-cold, passionless beauty called up another mobile thoroughbred face instinct with quick flashings of mirth and hauteur. Again he felt the fierce clutch of small fingers, as they fought with his in that struggle for his life. Each line of that face stood before him—the arching brows, the cameo-delicacy of profile, the magnolia skin and hair like a brown-gold cloud across the sun.

He stepped down to the graveled drive and followed it to the gate, then, bareheaded, took the Red Road. Along this highway he had rattled in Uncle Jefferson's crazy hack—with her red rose in his hand. The musky scent of the pressed leaves in the book in his pocket seemed to be all about him.

The odor of living roses, in fact, was in the air. It came on the scarce-felt breeze, a heavy calling perfume. He walked on, keeping the road by the misty infiltrating shimmer of the stars, with a sensation rather of gliding than of walking. It occurred to him that if, as scientists say, colors emit sound-tones, scents also should possess a music of their own: the honeysuckle fragrance, maybe—soft mellow fluting as of diminutive wind-instruments; the far-faint sickly odor of lilies—the upper register of faery violins; this spicy breath of roses—blending, throbbing chords like elfin echoes of an Italian harp. The fancy pleased him; he could imagine the perfume now in the air carried with it an under-music, like a ghostly harping.

It came to him at the same instant that this was no mere fancy. Somewhere in the languorous night a harp was being played. He paused and listened intently, then went on toward the sound. The rose scent had grown stronger; it was almost in that heavy air, as if he were breasting an etherial sea of attar. He felt as if he were treading on a path of rose-leaves, down which the increasing melody flowed crimsonly to him, calling, calling.

He stopped stock-still. He had been skirting a close-cropped hedge of box. This had ended abruptly and he was looking straight up a bar of green-yellow radiance from a double doorway. The latter opened on a porch and the light, flung across this, drenched an arbor of climbing roses, making it stand out a mass of woven rubies set in emerald.

He drew a long sigh of more than delight, for framed in the doorway he saw a figure in misty white, leaning to the gilded upright of a harp. He knew at once that it was Shirley. Holding his breath, he came closer, his feet muffled in the thick grass. He stood in the dense obscurity, one hand gripping the gnarled limb of a catalpa, his eyes following the shapely arms from wrist to shoulder, the fingers straying across the strings, the bending cheek caressing the carved wood. She was playing the melody of Shelley's "Indian Serenade"—touching the chords softly and tenderly—and his lips moved, molding themselves soundlessly to the words.

The serenade died in a single long note. As if in answer to it there rose a flood of bird-music from beyond the arbor—jets of song that swelled and rippled to a soaring melody. She heard it, too, for the gracile fingers fell from the strings. She listened a moment, with head held to one side, then sprang up and came through the door and down the steps.

He hesitated a moment, then a single stride took him from the shadow.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Beyond the Box-Hedge.

As he greeted her, his gaze plunged deep into hers. She had recoiled a step, startled, to recognize him almost instantly. He noted the shrinking and thought it due to a stabbing memory of that forest-horror. His first words were prosaic enough:

"I'm an unconscionable trespasser," he said. "It must seem awfully prowly, but I didn't realize I was on private property till I passed the hedge there."

As her hand lay in his, a strange fancy stirred in him: in that wood-meeting she had seemed something witch-like, the wilful spirit of the passionate spring herself, mixed of her aerial essences and jungle wildernesses; in this scented dim-lit close she was grave-eyed, subdued, a paler pensive woman of under half-guessed sadnesses and haunting moods. With her answer, however, this gravity seemed to slip from her like a garment. She laughed lightly.

"I love to prowl myself. I think sometimes I like the night better than

What He Had Drawn From the Shelf Was the Morocco Case That Held the Rusted Dueling-Pistol!

the day. I believe in one of my incarnations I must have been a panther."

They both laughed. "I'm growing superstitious about flowers," he said. "You know a rose figured in our first meeting. And in our last—"

She shrank momentarily. "The cape jessamines! I shall always think of that when I see them!"

"Ah, forgive me!" he begged. "But when I remember what you did—for me! Oh, I know! But for you, I must have died."

"But for me you wouldn't have been bitten. But don't let's talk of it." She shivered suddenly.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Not There for Experiment.

Edith and Flora were passing their summer vacation in the country.

"Do you know," said Edith, "that young farmer tried to kiss me. He told me that he had never kissed any girl before."

"What did you tell him?" asked Flora.

"Why," replied Edith, "I told him I was no agricultural experiment station."—Harper's Bazaar.

GOT INFORMATION TOO LATE

Probably Station Master Laughed a Little Before He Knew He Had the Best of the Joke.

"Look here," said the traveler to the railway station master, "don't you think that thing is rather dangerous where—"

"Ah!" interrupted the official, who had just been promoted, "you've noticed that barrow, have you, sir? You're going to make a suggestion about the place where it ought to stand, I suppose? Might I go on, sir, and ask your opinion about the position of the ticket office? Do you think the signal box is in the right place? Shouldn't the station master's house be shifted a few yards farther west? Any opinion you would like to express, sir, shall have immediate attention."

The traveler went away, and the station master turned round triumphantly to the conductor of a train waiting in the siding.

"Ha, ha!" he laughed. "Did you see the sport I had with that old nuisance? I soon shut him up."

"I'm not so sure of that," replied the conductor. "You see, he's the traffic manager."—London Tit-Bits.

Selfish Optimism.

Dr. Chauncey M. Depew, at a dinner to the earl of Kintore in New York, was declaring gravely that the bill which grants free canal tolls to American coastwise shipping must be repealed under pain perhaps of war, when a coastwise shipper shouted jocularly:

"Oh, be an optimist, doctor."

"Be an optimist, eh?" said Dr. Depew. "Well, there's too much optimism already—too much optimism of a certain kind."

"'What is an optimist, sir?' a little boy once asked me.

"'An optimist, sonny,' I replied, 'is a man who doesn't care what happens, so long as it doesn't happen to him.'"

Softened.

"Why didn't you whip your dog?"

"Because when I started in to whip him he licked me."

Certainly Not.

"I don't waste any time on anything don't understand."

"Then you never eat hash."

Quite the Contrary.

"Is the craze for colored hair dying out?"

"On the contrary, it is dyeing in."

For a Rainy Day.

"Does your wife try to put anything by for a rainy day?"

"Yes, she is saving a rainbow wig."

Both Ways.

"That was a raw deal he got."

"Yes, but you must confess it was well done."

Orators have been known to convince others without convincing themselves.

The average married man is the kind of husband that makes the neighbors feel sorry for his wife.

Most of us think we know a lot of people that his satanic majesty doesn't have to waste any time running after.

Paintings are never hung until after they have been executed.

However, a good man isn't necessarily a desirable neighbor.

The Handy Man.

Cuthbert Pipwhistle waited in palpitating silence for Gervangeline to answer the great question he had just put to her. Would she say: "Yes, Cuthbert," or would she prefer to remain Miss Smith?

Slowly Gervangeline turned her peroxide head around and gazed into the young man's eyes. Cuthbert took her hand.

"Do you play cards for money?" she asked impressively.

"No," said Cuthbert, lying like a hero. "But if I did I would win a lot of money at the moment."

"How so, dear Cuthbert?"

"Just look what a ripping hand I hold!"

Her beautiful head dropped on to his shoulder.

Sacrifice.

"You are not willing to give up the slightest selfish pleasure!" said she.

"You wrong me," replied he. "I used to be very fond of bicycle riding and I gave it up years ago."

Painful Process.

Little Prescott had been leaning out of an upstair window.

"Come away from the window, son," his father said sternly. "You might fall out and get a hump on you back—like the camels you saw yesterday."

The little boy was silent for a few minutes. Then he asked: "Father, do all the little camels have to fall out of the window to get their humps?"

WAS FIRST AMERICAN BANK

Boston Institution That Issued $400,000 in Scrip in 1714 Is Accorded That Honor.

The first bank in America, located on State street, Boston, loaned money on real estate, personal property and imperishable merchandise, though it had not the privilege of issuing money, then a prerogative of the Bay State colony. After a few years Boston's first branch discontinued business and was started in 1714, ten years after the first newspaper was printed in Boston. The new bank carried on business and issued $400,000 in scrip on the basis now sought by certain financial promoters and leaders. It was scrip and nothing but scrip, and consequently the bank was short-lived.

In 1742 a land bank was founded by several hundred subscribers who gathered in Boston as the bankers are meeting today and who attempted to relieve the scarcity of specie by issuing scrip based on real estate holdings. A specie bank was also founded about the same time, but both institutions found it as impossible to compete with the "bills of credit" issued by nearly every colony as it would be today to rival the government in minting money. All this paper money rapidly depreciated in value, owing to the constant and heavy expenditure for military movements of offense and defense against the Canadian French and their Indian allies.

In 1782, during the revolution, the Bank of North America of Philadelphia received a charter from congress, and its operations in the Bay State inspired the establishment of the Bank of Massachusetts in March, 1784, an institution which is still in operation as the First National bank of Boston.—National Magazine.

Theater 2,400 Years Old to Reopen.

Much interest in social and archaeological circles centers around the program arranged by the Marquis Lentini calling for the production of a number of tragedies by historic Greek poets at the old theater of Syracuse, Italy. Among these is the "Agamemnon" of Aeschylus, of which a new translation is being prepared by Professor Remagnoli, a well known and distinguished Greek scholar. Aeschylus himself superintended the representation of this play in the famous theater of Syracuse 2,400 years ago.

After much negotiations the marquis has obtained the permit to open the theater next spring. In Cicero's day the theater seated 40,000. It is cut in the rock a little way above the town and the various tiers are wonderfully well preserved.

Fire Stopped Church Service.

The sermon was stopped when the Rev. C. J. Whitehead, vicar of South Newington, five miles from Hanbury, Oxfordshire, England, was informed that the vicarage was on fire. He pronounced the benediction, and, accompanied by most of the congregation, hurried to the house to remove furniture, books and valuables. News of the fire was sent to Bloxham, where a fire engine is stationed, and as most of the members of the brigade were at church, the service there was suspended also, the entire congregation trooping out, despite an appeal from the vicar to remain.

HER RIGHTS IN THE HOME

Woman Contends That Wife's Services Are Worth More Than Food and Raiment—Her Remedy.

Is a woman's life worth only her food and clothing? In every position on earth, except that of a wife, a person is entitled to wages. A wife generally does all that a servant would do, and a great deal more, works more hours a day than a man and goes through ordeals that are almost beyond human endurance, yet many wives do endure this for half a century with only enough to eat and keep them warm, never having an extra dollar to spend. They even have to ask for money to buy postage stamps.

I think a woman should have absolute control of all household affairs. She should watch corners and know how to deal wisely. She should be allowed to manage her house in whatever way seems best to her. She should have enough of an allowance to cover necessary expenses, and a special allowance for her individual needs, and should never have to ask for it.—Extract from a letter written by a woman on the subject of a wife's expenditures, in Farm and Fireside.

Enamel Chips in Sausages.

M. Martel, chief of the veterinary department of the Paris board of health, has just made a report on sausage manufacturing which contains some interesting revelations. He was specifically interested in ascertaining to what extent chips of the enamel coating of the meat grinders got into the finished sausages. His microscope showed him in a large number of sausages minute particles of enamel with sharp points, capable of producing erosions of the intestines.

Doctor Martel found few sausage machines in perfect condition, and learned that after very brief use the enamel of such grinders almost always chips off. He has asked the prefect of the Seine to forbid the use of enameled machines. Some manufacturers had discovered this defect themselves and had already put in machines in which nothing but polished steel comes in contact with the meat